



Eddie A. Perez
Mayor

MAYOR CALLS NEW COURANT WEBSITE CONTROLS “POSITIVE STEP”

---NEWS RELEASE---

(June 30, 2008)--- Hartford Mayor Eddie A. Perez applauds Sunday’s announcement by Hartford Courant Publisher Steve Carver that the Courant will be implementing new controls on its reader forums to prevent the spread of racist comments and hate speech on the Courant.com website. Mr. Carver announced those controls yesterday in a commentary published in the Sunday Courant. He outlined how the Courant would devote more staff time and resources to monitoring and deleting racist hate speech from the website.

On June 16th, Mayor Perez and a number of city officials sent letters to Mr. Carver and Sam Zell, the CEO of the Courant’s parent company Tribune, asking them to take immediate steps to address the offensive comments aimed at minorities that were becoming prevalent in Courant.com on-line forums. On June 20th, representatives from numerous civil rights groups including the NAACP, Love Makes a Family, the Latino and Puerto Rican Affairs Commission and the African American Affairs Commission, joined elected officials at a rally outside the Courant’s Broad Street Headquarters to demand common sense reforms and controls on the website to prevent the publication of hate speech on the site.

Mayor Perez says, “Sunday’s announcement by Steve Carver and the Hartford Courant is a very positive step. The Courant has admitted in public that it has a problem with racist comments and hate speech being posted on its website and is now committed to taking steps to fix the problem. The reforms are long overdue, but I am glad the Courant has finally begun to address the community’s concerns.”

“The challenges for the Courant going forward is to guarantee that appropriate resources are devoted to monitoring the site and that the steps taken are effective. Additionally, the Courant should keep the community apprised of its progress and solicit feedback on how it can improve its controls on the site,” Mayor Perez added.

Mayor Perez will invite Mr. Carver to a meeting with community leaders to explain the steps the Courant has taken to improve controls on its website and to discuss how the Courant can work with the community going forward to prevent Courant.com from becoming a platform for hate speech.

“I applaud the numerous elected officials and community leaders for speaking out against the hateful comments on the Courant website and I look forward to joining with them to help the Courant build on the positive steps it has taken to reform the Courant.com website,” the Mayor stated.